

**A NEW SPECIES OF *POGONUS NICOLAI* (COLEOPTERA: CARABIDAE) FROM NORTHERN AUSTRALIA**

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**Abstract**

*Pogonus variabilis* sp. n. is described from northern Australian coastal districts, ranging from Western Australia, through the Northern Territory to the Queensland Gulf. A record of *P. nigrescens* Baehr from north-eastern coastal Queensland is also reported and its ecological significance is discussed.

**Introduction**

Seven species of *Pogonus* have already been recorded from Australia but their distributions are still very imperfectly known. Six of these species were dealt with in my earlier paper (Moore 1977), when the genus appeared to be restricted to saline habitats in central and southern regions of the continent. However, the subsequent description of *P. nigrescens* (Baehr 1984), from near Ravenshoe in tropical Queensland, indicated a substantially wider geographical range and perhaps, less strictly halophile habits for some of the species.

In the present paper, a further new species is described from northern coastal districts and a new record of *P. nigrescens* from coastal Queensland is reported. The new data confirm that the genus has an essentially pan-Australian distribution and tend to uphold the earlier belief that all included species are halophiles.

***Pogonus variabilis* sp. n. (Figs 1-2)**

Types. NORTHERN TERRITORY: holotype male, South Alligator River, Arnhem Highway, 11.xii.1982, A. Walford-Huggins, in the Australian National Insect Collection (ANIC), CSIRO, Canberra. Paratypes, 3 males, 4 females, same data as holotype, in the author's collection (now lodged with ANIC). There are other specimens (topotypes) with the same data in the Walford-Huggins' collection. Largely pale, yellowish-brown but head and pronotum darker, brownish to bronze-black; elytra pale, with dark striae punctures, or with 4 inner intervals anterior to apical declivity also dark; margins of mandibles, eyes and most of underside, except margins of abdominal sternites, dark brownish-black; antennae, palpi and legs entirely pale, straw-yellow. Hindwings fully developed. Head rather large, impunctate but very finely reticulate; eyes large and prominent, not enclosed behind by the genae; frontal furrows short, shallow, semicircular; antennae of average length for genus, the outer segments increasingly broad and compressed, laterally. Pronotum slightly transverse (3 x 2.5 mm in holotype), a little broader at apex than at base, convex, shining, but basal impressions and transverse sulcus strongly rugose; anterior margin slightly sinuate; posterior margin

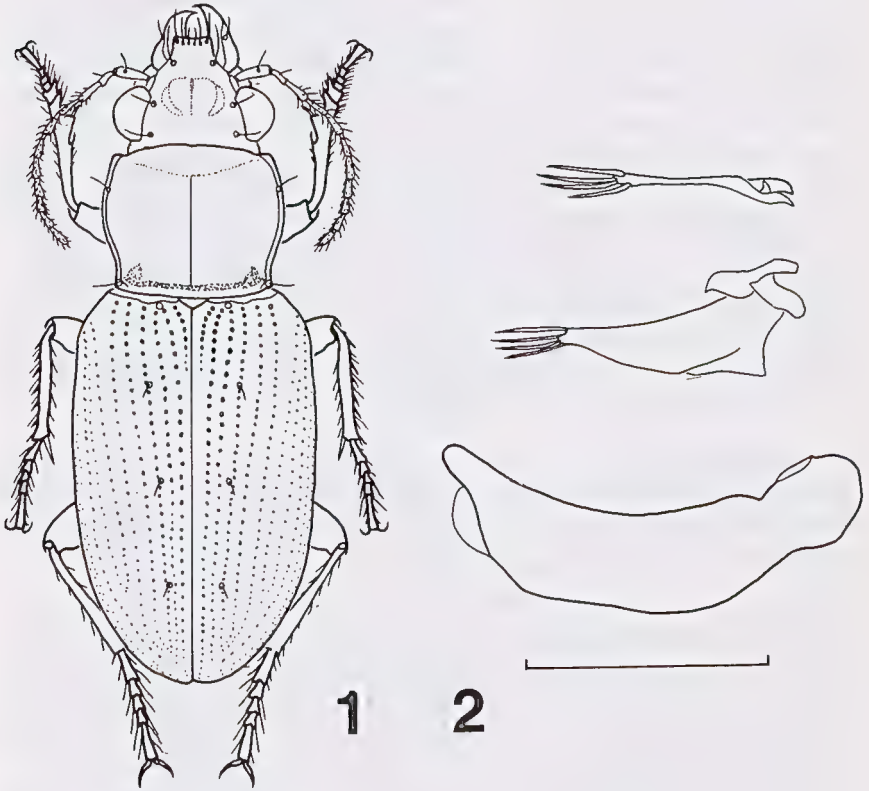
slightly arcuate; sides oblique in front half, broadly sinuate before hind angles; front angles rounded but subprominent, well separated from margins of head; hind angles obtuse but well marked; marginal channel narrow in middle, explanate and poorly defined at extremities; basal impressions shallow and ill defined; no marginal carina; median line lightly impressed on disc. Elytra elongate, finely shagreened and lightly striate, convex basally but more depressed towards apex; striae strongly punctate near base but progressively weaker towards apex, evanescent on apical declivity; humeri broadly rounded; 3rd intervals with 3 small setiferous pores, contiguous with 3rd striae; legs of average length for genus; male anterior tarsi weakly expanded. Aedeagus weakly sclerotised; median lobe laterally compressed; parameres each with 4 apical setae. Length 9-11 mm; max. width 3.9-4.0 mm.

### Diagnostic notes

The type material shows very little variation, all specimens having the foreparts dark brown, but in 2 females (not types) from Karumba, northern Queensland (14.iii.1985, at light, K. & E. Carnaby, ANIC), the foreparts are almost as pale as the elytra. In a male from Wyndham, N.W. Australia (W. Crawshaw, no date, in the British Museum (Natural History), London), the foreparts are bronze-black, as are the 4 inner elytral intervals, except near apex. There is thus a suggestion of clinal variation from west to east, but alternatively, distinct subspecies could be involved. More material, from intervening localities, would be needed to resolve the matter but meanwhile, it is clear that the new species has an extensive range along the tropical northern Australian coast. The above-mentioned specimen from Wyndham is labelled as being a "cotype" of "*Pogonus marginalis* Sloane", in Sloane's handwriting, but this name was evidently never published and no specimen of the species remains in his collection (ANIC). By virtue of its general habitus and setation, *Pogonus variabilis* is evidently close to the type species (the all-dark European *P. chalceus* (Marsham)) and indeed, it resembles even more closely the Mediterranean *P. pallidipennis* Dejean, but the latter is somewhat smaller (length 7-9 mm) and there are pronounced submarginal carinae near the pronotal hind angles. Within the Australian fauna, *P. variabilis* is the largest known member of the genus and among the more or less depigmented species, it could be confused only with *P. hypharpagoides* Sloane, which shares its robust build. The latter, however, is smaller (length 7.2 - 8.1 mm) and uniformly pale, and has markedly less prominent eyes.

### *Pogonus nigrescens* Baehr

New record - a male in poor condition (aedeagus missing) among unsorted material in the Sloane collection (ANIC), with the following data: Townsville, ix.1903, F.P. Dodd.



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Figs 1-2. *Pogonus variabilis* sp. n.: (1) holotype male (natural length = 11 mm); (2) aedeagus in left lateral view, with the parameres detached. Scale-line = 1 mm.

**Discussion**

The discovery of *Pogonus variabilis* from a wide range of coastal districts of northern Australia virtually establishes the pan-continental distribution of the genus in this country and it now seems likely that one species or another will be found in every major saline land habitat that has not yet been investigated. In these circumstances, it is somewhat surprising that no member of the genus has yet been

reported from New Guinea (Darlington 1962, 1971). However, this apparent lacuna may well be due to inadequate collecting, although it could perhaps also reflect the general paucity of suitable habitats in that large but generally, well watered country. The type locality of *P. nigrescens*, near Ravenshoe, northern Queensland, is a large shallow depression in open forest that appears to be well removed from any saline habitat (Baehr 1984, p. 171), a fact which led its author to express some doubt as to whether this species is as strictly halophilous as are its better known congeners. However, the record from Townsville, where there are adequate nearby saline habitats, tends to counter this. Certainly, other, strictly halophile species such as *Bembidion (Desarmatocillenus) albovirens* (Sloane, 1903) are already known from the latter locality. One may therefore speculate that the unique type of *P. nigrescens*, which was taken at light, could have been a stray intercepted from a migratory flight, rather than a local specimen from the Ravenshoe district.

### Acknowledgments

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